

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A labelling plant for a container having a rim or collar, comprising:

a ~~device (3)~~ device for supporting and transporting at least one container suspended in an erect position acting from above on the container,

~~means (4)~~ means for mounting a heat-shrinkable annular ~~band (5)~~ band onto said container acting from below,

~~means (6)~~ means being provided to cause ~~means for causing said label~~ means for causing said label ~~annular band~~ annular band to adhere to said container by heat-shrinkage, ~~characterised in that~~

wherein said means for mounting a heat-shrinkable annular band onto said container comprise at least one vertically movable support plate ~~(42,52) for the label disposed for the annular band, which is disposed vertically with which, and~~

~~the means (6)~~ means for causing the heat-shrinkable annular ~~band (5)~~ band to adhere by heat-shrinkage are ~~associated~~ supported on said support plate.

2. (Currently Amended) A plant as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein said ~~means (6)~~ means for causing the heat-shrinkable annular ~~band (7)~~ band to adhere by heat-shrinkage comprises a system for delivering a hot fluid.

3. (Currently Amended) A plant as claimed in claim 2, ~~characterised in that~~
wherein said hot fluid is steam.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A plant as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~
wherein said means for causing the heat-shrinkable annular band ~~(5)~~ band to adhere to the
container comprise ~~a cylinder (54) and a plurality of hot fluid dispensing nozzles (55) supported~~
~~by supported on the~~ vertically movable support plate ~~(52)~~.

6. (Currently Amended) A plant as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~
wherein said vertically movable support plate ~~(42, 52) is associated with~~ comprises a unit for
maintaining ~~vertical~~ the heat-shrinkable annular band ~~(5)~~ band vertical.

7. (Currently Amended) A plant as claimed in claim 6, ~~characterised in that~~
wherein said unit for maintaining ~~vertical~~ the heat-shrinkable annular band ~~(7)~~ band vertical
comprises ~~four~~ vertical rods ~~(45)~~ branching from a second plate ~~(43)~~ connected to the vertically
movable support plate ~~(42, 52)~~ by virtue of at least one cylinder-piston unit ~~(44)~~.

8. (Currently Amended) A plant as claimed in claim 7, ~~characterised in that~~
wherein said vertical rods ~~(45)~~ are disposed on the perimeter of an imaginary circumference to
maintain the ~~label 5~~ heat-shrinkable annular band widened while it is mounted onto the container.

9. (Currently Amended) A plant as claimed in claim 7 ~~characterised in that~~
wherein said vertical rods ~~(45)~~ are inserted through corresponding matching holes present in the
vertically movable support plate ~~(42,52)~~ and pass beyond said plate to externally receive the
heat-shrinkable annular ~~band (5)~~ band.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (New) An apparatus for labelling at least one container having a rim or collar,
said apparatus comprising:

a support positioned above said at least one container and configured to support and
transport said at least one container in a suspended erect position;

a mounting device configured to mount a vertically disposed heat-shrinkable
annular band onto said at least one container from below;

a heater for adhering said heat-shrinkable annular band to said at least one container
by heat-shrinkage; and

at least one vertically movable support plate that is attached to and supports both
the mounting device and the heater.

12. (New) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said at least one vertically
movable support plate is configured to vertically transport said heat-shrinkable annular band onto
said at least one container.

13. (New) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said heater is configured to deliver a hot fluid to adhere said heat-shrinkable annular band to said at least one container.

14. (New) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said hot fluid is steam.

15. (New) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said heater comprises a plurality of hot fluid dispensing nozzles supported on said at least one vertically movable support plate.

16. (New) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said at least one vertically movable support plate comprises at least one unit configured to maintain said heat-shrinkable annular band in a vertical position.

17. (New) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said at least one unit comprises one or more vertical rods branching from a second plate connected to the at least one vertically movable support plate by way of at least one cylinder-piston unit.

18. (New) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said one or more vertical rods are equally spaced apart and form the perimeter of a circumference, the centre of which passes through the vertical axis of each said at least one container, to maintain said heat-shrinkable annular band in a widened position when being mounted onto said at least one container.

19. (New) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said one or more vertical rods are inserted through corresponding matching holes present in the vertically movable support plate and pass beyond said plate to externally receive the heat-shrinkable annular band.